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ABSTRACT

The author defines and examines briefly continuing education as the process by which life-long educational needs of the individual and society are met, requiring new administration and community involvement. The paper also examines in outline form the societal context in which individuals which make up that society find themselves today, in terms of interdependence, rich and poor nations, and a changing occupational structure. The changes in the future are discussed in regard to health and life, environment and technology. There are individual and societal needs for continuing education that revolve around coping with the knowledge explosion; solving community problems; enriching one's life; pursuing interests; and upgrading professions, careers and jobs. In tabular form, the author explains one taxonomy of the categories of Community Service Programs and examples of such programs in Alberta. Another taxonomy dealing with self-development, community development, and program development functions is defined. The conclusion provides recommendations for effective community leadership in implementing these programs. (JB)

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OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 1

CONTINUING EDUCATION & NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY *

BY
DR. R.G. FAST.

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CONTINUING EDUCATION AND NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY

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FOREWORD

This is the first in a series of Occasional Papers which will be published by the Association for Continuing Education for its members.

The paper was presented by Dr. Ray G. Fast to the Annual Conference of the B.C. Association of Continuing Education Administrators on May 7th, 1973, and he has kindly consented to its reproduction in this form.

Dr. Fast has been involved in education and in advanced education for many years, and has attempted over the past five years to identify educational needs throughout the Province of Alberta and to accomodate these needs through the establishment, approval and implementation of new programs.

He has had "numerous opportunities to observe that there are a multitude of needs of both individuals and society which our formal educational institutions are not yet meeting, and therefore has become somewhat frustrated about this lack of ability to provide appropriate kinds of education for every circumstance."

It is hoped that you will find this paper of interest and value.

Derek Franklin
Editor, ACE Newsletter

Introduction

There must have been a note of hesitancy on my part when your Chairman called me several months ago to advise me that the British Columbia Association of Continuing Education Administrators was preparing for its annual conference, that the theme would be: Scanning Horizons in Continuing Education, and to invite me to speak to you on this topic today. Some time later I began to wonder whether I had been somewhat naive in accepting this assignment because it would be virtually impossible to scan the horizons even superficially in the time allotted to me this morning. However, as I began to devote some attention to the topic at hand it occurred to me that given certain delimitations it would be possible to highlight at least some areas in the field of continuing education as it relates to our society today, so I have entitled my address this morning: Continuing Education and North American Society.

Let me begin by identifying the delimitations which I have placed on this paper.

First, it will be limited to an examination in outline form of the societal context in which the individuals which make up that society find themselves today; it will attempt to look briefly at a future society; it will move to the social, cultural, and educational needs of individuals in that society; then it will explore briefly some definitions and types of continuing education designed to accommodate these needs; and finally it will explore a few implications for continuing education administrators.

A second delimitation relates to definitions of the term continuing education which, while it is discussed in some detail later, is in the interests of time used synonymously with other terms such as community education, community services education, and extension education. On this point I must say that I tend to agree at least in part with Bosetti who wrote:

> Continuing education and community services have long been the subject of discussion, much of which has centered upon an almost scholastic attempt to differentiate between the two as being separate and distinct concepts. Rather than continue discourse as to distinctions, a more useful approach is to review briefly the kinds of services which people want and require, and to which they may not already have access.[1]

Third, while some typologies and taxonomies do exist in this field, it must be recognized that there is as yet no systematized body of knowledge called continuing education, no theory of continuing education, and no theoretically based research in the continuing education field. Consequently, this paper is limited essentially to personal observations and some bibliographical research.

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[1]Bosetti, R.A. *The Alberta System of Post-Secondary Non-University Education: Master Plan Number One.* The Alberta Colleges Commission, Edmonton, 1972, p. 109.

The Societal Context

In order to attempt to define with any degree of accuracy the extent to which continuing education can meet societal needs, it is necessary to have some understanding of the society in which we exist in the next few decades. This section of the paper describes some of the recent societal changes and gazes briefly into society's crystal ball to look at the future.

If we look back a few decades we note that society moved at a snail's pace until some time after the first World War. Then suddenly the decades of the 1930's and the 1940's witnessed an era of mass production which North America had hardly dreamed possible. Gradually this era merged into the age of automation in the 1950's, and then in the last decade came the cybernetic revolution--an age in which the computer inexorably invaded the domain of human brain power. This dramatic explosion of scientific knowledge which resulted in man conquering a new world--one which until a few years earlier only the science fiction writers had dreamed possible--has had numerous and varied effects on society. Let us look at only a few of these.

1. Interdependence. We are now living in an interdependent world--one which Marshall McLuhan has called the global village. The growing trend of nations to stockpile weapons of mass destruction coupled with the likelihood of their increasing miniaturization and concomitant secrecy and stealth of delivery will force us to interdependence through mass communication, world markets, and a world community if we are to survive.

2. Division of the World into Rich and Poor Nations. Technological advances in Western Society appear to have widened the gulf between those who have and those who have not--between the rich nations and the poor nations. According to Kahn and Wiener, in 1965 the average per capita income among Western nations including Japan was 12 times the average for less developed countries. It is predicted that by the year 2000 this gap will have grown such that the rich nations will have a per capita income of 18 times that of poor nations.

3. A Changing Occupational Structure. Another consequence of these events has been the extent to which the occupational structure in Canada has undergone some rather striking changes. At least the following three generalizations can be made about the changing occupational structure in this country in the last decade:

(a) Farm laborers have all but disappeared from the manpower scene.

(b) Jobs demanding increased training and education are on the increase, while jobs which minimize cognitive content and emphasize manual skills are decreasing.

(c) The greatest relative changes occurring are the marked increase in the professional-technical and clerical-sales categories, and the sharp decrease in employment for unskilled laborers.

Now, if these changes in the last three decades seem melodramatic, the changes predicted for the future three decades are almost incomprehensible. Let us turn briefly to the futurologists to see what they predict the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's hold in store for us in a few areas.

1. Health and Life. Gordon and Ament[2] predict that by 1985 there will be a solution to the foreign body rejection problem which will result in a vastly improved process of organ transplantation. To meet the need for natural transportable organs, "parts" banks will be operating. Similarly, artificial organs will be developed and perfected by about 1990. They also maintain that genetic control related especially to artificial life, life synthesis, and altered reproduction techniques will have been perfected by the year 2000; that several forms of mental illness will have been eliminated; that personality management and thought control will be perfected by 1985; and that some time after the year 2000 there will be a substantial increase in extension or prolongation of human life through medical practices.

2. Environment. Other futurologists have predicted that weather control on a limited basis will be perfected by the year 2000; that successful attempts at controlled environments such as domed cities and underground and underwater habitats will have been made in response to anticipated massive pollution; that there will be a synthesization of all foods, fabrics, paper products and construction materials; and that large scale exportation of water resources to the United States will take place.

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[2]Gordon, Theodore and Robert Ament, "Forecasts of Some Technological and Scientific Development and Their Societal Consequences." Unpublished paper, Middletown, Connecticut: The Institute for the Future, 1969, pp. 41-47.

3. Technological. Predictions about technological advances in the next three decades include: perfection of laser technology and nuclear propulsion techniques; transportation of commodities by pipeline; three-dimensional television; and even the rudimentary use of gravity as a source of power.

While these are only a few of the changes that have occurred in the last few decades and will occur in the next three decades according to some futurologists, perhaps they will serve to illustrate today's and tomorrow's world.

Now you will ask: how does all of this relate to continuing education? Why is he discussing scientific and technological achievements of the past, present, and future when the theme of this convention is Scanning the Horizons in Continuing Education?

Well ladies and gentlemen, I believe that the changes which have just been enumerated have very important implications for continuing education. I believe that arising from these scientific advances are numerous individual and societal needs which have not yet been accommodated either by science or by formal educational channels. Allow me to refer to just some of these.

Individual and Societal Needs for Continuing Education

Bosetti[3] suggests five types of individual needs for continuing educational programs. These include (1) the pursuit of life long interests, (2) professional, career, and vocational upgrading, (3) coping with the unparalleled knowledge explosion of our time, (4) identifying and resolving or attempting to resolve community problems, and (5) life enrichment. Venn supports Bosetti's thesis when he writes:

> No person in the future, however formally educated, can ever escape the need to learn, the need to grow, and the need to keep up with the exploding quantity of knowledge in every field. An individual citizen's economic stability, personal fulfillment, and social responsibility are enhanced by ready access to educational resources and the opportunity for formalized continuing education.[4]

One could also hypothesize that continuing education might very well be the one form of learning to which individuals might cling in overcoming or resisting the future shock to which Alvin Toffler refers.

In addition to the individual needs for continuing education, there are certain societal needs. We have just discussed the tremendous scientific and technological advances made in the last few decades. But we have not made much reference to the accompanying social problems which have lagged far behind but which are perhaps even more meaningful to those individuals

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[3]Bosetti, R. A., op. cit.

[4]Venn, Grant. *Man, Education, and Manpower.* Washington: The American Association of School Administrators, 1970, p. 122.

affected by them. I am thinking here, of course, of things such as wars and warfare, poverty and starvation, crime, disease, and racial problems, to name just some. While some sociologists and scientists refer to these serious concerns as "social lag" which eventually will catch up to the scientific advances, I sometimes wonder whether this is not better defined as the great credibility gap in education, and if so, whether continuing education does not have a vital role to play here as well. Allow me to elaborate briefly on this credibility gap. Through the late 1950's and the 1960's educators across Canada and the United States sold governments and the public on the idea that education was the complete answer to all of the world's problems--to poverty, to crime, to wars and warfare, to racial problems; and educators were successful in convincing governments that if only they would have an unlimited supply of finances available to them, the major problems that face nations and their governments would be solved. Educators, statesmen and the public adopted educational cliches. For example, we unearthed Socrates' famous statement "Knowledge is virtue"; Dewey's "Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform"; ex-teacher and ex-President Johnson's "Because teachers are molding the minds of tomorrow's leaders, the hope for a better America rests upon their shoulders"; Truman's "In our schools men are education for justice, liberty and peace"; or Nixon's Commission's "Education is an investment in less crime." Throughout the last two decades we accepted these slogans and really believed that educators would lead our nations out of the wilderness and everything would be fine. Today, of course, governments and the public know better--they know that this was a lot of nonsense and consequently

education--particularly university education has lost much of its credibility. Because of this "bill of goods" which never materialized, because the formal educational institutions and programs were not able to meet individual and societal needs, we are witnessing today an era where educational funds are no longer so willingly donated to educational institutions, and we see as well a dramatic swing away from university education to career and continuing education. I believe this will continue for many years because not only do the personal and societal needs exist, but individuals are more and more becoming disenchanted with the traditional full-time student learning concept at large impersonal formal institutions. Furthermore, those who do graduate with certificates, diplomas, or degrees will come to realize that the word graduation is now obsolete and that education is a life-long concept which carries on long after formal education has been completed. It is this very vital role in the educational credibility gap which continuing education must fill.

Definitions of Continuing Education

This leads to the next question: What is continuing education? How is it defined?

The definition of continuing education has passed through an interesting evolution. It is likely accurate to say that early definitions were comparatively limited in their potential impact as compared with more recent conceptualizations. Continuing education in its earlier stages tended to define limited programs such as recreation for adults and children and were usually a simple extension of the existing curriculum. Later continuing education came to encompass a great conglomeration of courses

synonymous with such concepts as adult education, community education, general interest courses, and extended activities for students. Today there is some agreement by students of this field that continuing education is best defined not so much by program or product as it is by the process by which the life-long educational needs of the individual and of the society are met. Within this process, however, there are numerous programs, courses and services available to individuals and groups who wish to avail themselves of them.

The importance of continuing education in the Province of Alberta is highlighted by the major emphasis placed on it in the Worth Report. Worth deals squarely with the new philosophy of education for the individual as it exists from birth to death. Structurally, he says there are four phases of education: early education, referring to the years before six; basic education, which includes grades one to twelve; higher education, which involves universities, colleges, institutes of technology and other conventional types of institutions for advanced education; and further education, which is an extension proposed to make the educational system life-long. He indicates that for some further education begins after basic education ends, while for others it begins at the end of the higher education process. The goals of further education according to Worth are to provide the individual with personal autonomy, social competence, ethical discretion, creative capacity, career proficiency, and intellectual power. The functions are motivation, emancipation, and career integration.

Shorter in commenting on the Worth Report had this to say about continuing education:

> . . . it becomes our longest period of education because it goes on as long as we go on. Because the pace of change has become a gallop requiring frequent periods of re-training and career change, further education has taken on dramatic new importance in our lives. Our increasing amount of leisure time has heightened that importance and multiplied the demands. It is said that doctors bury their mistakes; our schools pass their mistakes on to further education. Proper help must be available.[5]

Perhaps Kerensky's[6] five point summary in a recent issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan* is as good a definition of continuing education as any. He says:

1. Community education is not a product. It is not a series of packages. It is a process that attempts to educate and mobilize everyone in the development of educational goals for a community.

2. Community education is a new form that requires new administration --- it is a process for putting the ideas, wants and needs of local citizens back into the educational system.

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[5]Shorter, Larry. *A Reader's Companion to the Alberta Worth Report on Educational Planning*, Edmonton: Department of Education, 1973, p. 10.

[6]Kerensky, V. M. "Correcting Some Misconceptions About Community Education," *Phi Delta Kappan*, November, 1972, p. 158.

3. Community education is an alternative organizational form to decentralize and debureaucratize the schools. It is based on the philosophical assumption that if you want people to accept change they must be involved in the process.

4. Community education strives to mobilize the vast array of human and physical resources that are available in each community but often work in an independent and self-serving manner. It calls for all agencies to work together for the common benefit of all individuals and the community.

5. The community education concept mobilizes an entire community as teachers and learners.

Types of Continuing Education

Let me turn briefly now to a discussion of some types of continuing education. Taxonomies of this nature are frequently not very useful, and I am certain that many of you will be more familiar with programs of this nature than I am. Nevertheless, it may be of some interest to examine the types of programs offered in other areas. Table 1[7] describes the categories of community service programs available in Alberta's Colleges in 1971. You will note that it establishes thirteen categories somewhat arbitrarily. There is nothing sacred about the categories--in fact, a simple analysis of it reveals that many of the categories are not mutually exclusive.

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[7]Fast, R. G. "Community Services Programs in Alberta's Public Colleges: Recommendations for Their Support." A Discussion Paper Prepared for the Alberta Colleges Commission, Edmonton, 1971, p. 5.

Table 1

Categories of Community Service Programs Available in Alberta's Public Colleges Together with Examples of Programs in Each Category

Category	Examples of Programs
1. Vocational	Business, Agriculture, Welding, Mechanics, Management, Lithography, Hair Styling
2. Home Improvement	Rumpus Room Construction, Antiquing Furniture, Landscaping, Upholstery, Interior Decorating
3. Home Economics	Food Preparation, Sewing, Millinery, Cooking, Cake Decorating
4. Hobby Courses	Leather Craft, Fly Tying, Bridge, Horsemanship
5. Fine Arts	Music, Painting, Ceramics, Creative Decorating
6. General Education	History of Alberta, Study of the World, Canadian History, Psychology for Personal Growth, Foreign Languages
7. Seminars and Short Courses	English for New Canadians, In-Service Vocational Seminars
8. General Interest	Charm for Women, Car Owners for Women
9. Community Outreach	Leadership in Civic Affairs including YWCA, Community Leagues, Prisons, Chamber of Commerce
10. Group Music	Orchestras, Bands, Choirs
11. Group Recreation	Golf, Badminton, Basketball
12. Series and Production	Travel Series, Lecture Series, Concert Series, Drama Productions, Art Exhibitions

Another taxonomy of community services was prepared by Max Raines of Michigan State University. It is divided into three categories: self-development functions, community development functions, and program development functions. Raines was thinking essentially of the continuing education functions of community colleges when he developed this taxonomy.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS

Those functions and activities primarily focused upon the needs, aspirations and potentialities of individuals or informal groups of individuals to help them achieve a greater degree of personal self-realization and fulfillment.

Personal Counseling Function -- Providing opportunities for community members with self-discovery and development through individual and group counseling processes; e.g., aptitude-interest testing, individual interviews, career information, job placement, family life, etc.

Educational Extension Function -- Increasing the accessibility of the regular courses and curriculums by extending their availability to the community-at-large; e.g., evening classes, TV courses, "weekend college," neighborhood extension centers.

Educational Expansion Function -- Programing a variety of educational, upgrading and new career opportunities which reach beyond the traditional limitations of college credit restrictions; e.g., institutes, seminars, tours, short courses, contractual in-plant training, etc.

Social Outreach Function -- Organizing programs to increase the earning power, educational level, and political influence of disadvantaged; e.g., ADC mothers, unemployed males, educationally deprived youth, welfare recipients, etc.

Cultural Development Function -- Expanding opportunities for community members to participate in a variety of cultural activities; e.g., fine art series, art festivals, artists in residence, community theatre, etc.

Leisure-Time Activity Function -- Expanding opportunities for community members to participate in a variety of recreational activities; e.g., sports instruction, outdoor education, summer youth programs, senior citizen activities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS

Those functions and activities primarily focused upon cooperative efforts with community organizations, agencies and institutions to improve the physical, social, economic, and political environment of the community (e.g., housing, transportation, air pollution, human relations, etc.).

Community Analysis Function -- Collecting and analyzing significant data which reflect existing and emerging needs of the community and which can serve as a basis for developing the community service program; e.g., analyzing census tracts, analyzing manpower data, conducting problem-oriented studies, identifying roles and goals of organizations, etc.

Interagency Cooperation Function -- Establishing adequate linkage with related programs of the college and community to supplement and coordinate rather than duplicate existing programs; e.g., calendar coordination, information exchange, joint committee work, etc.

Advisory Liaison Function -- Identifying and involving (in an advisory capacity) key members of the various subgroups with whom cooperative programs are being planned; e.g., community services advisory council, *ad hoc* advisory committee, etc.

Public Forum Function -- Developing activities designed to stimulate interest and understanding of local, national, and world problems; e.g., public affairs pamphlets, "town" meetings, TV symposiums, etc.

Civic Action Function -- Participating in cooperative efforts with local government, business, industry, professions, religious and social groups to increase the resources of the community to deal with major problems confronting the community; e.g., community self-studies, urban beautification, community chest drives, air pollution, etc.

Staff Consultation Function -- Identifying, developing, and making available the consulting skills of the faculty in community development activities; e.g., consulting with small businesses, advising on instructional materials, designing community studies, instructing in group leadership, laboratory testing, etc.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS

Those functions and activities of the community services staff designed to procure and allocate resources, coordinate activities, establish objectives and evaluate outcomes.

Public Information Function -- Interpreting programs and activities of community services to the college staff as well as to the community-at-large and coordinating releases with the central information services of the college.

Professional Development Function -- Providing opportunities and encouragement for staff members to upgrade their skills in program development and evaluation; e.g., professional affiliations, exchange visitations, professional conferences, advanced graduate studies, etc.

Program Management Function -- Establishing procedures for procuring and allocating the physical and human resources necessary to implement the community services program; e.g., staff recruitment, job descriptions, budgetary development, etc.

Conference Planning Function -- Providing professional assistance to community groups in the planning of conferences, institutes, and workshops; e.g., registration procedures, program development, conference evaluation, etc.

Family Utilization Function -- Encouraging community use of college facilities by making them readily accessible, by facilitating the scheduling process, and by designing them for multipurpose activities when appropriate; e.g., campus tours, centralized scheduling office, conference rooms, auditorium design, etc.

Program Evaluation Function -- Developing with the staff the specific objectives of the program, identifying sources of data, and establishing procedures for gathering data to appraise the probable effectiveness of various facets of the program; e.g., behavioral changes, program requests, etc.

Implications and Challenges for Continuing Education Administrators

I turn now to the last section of this paper which deals essentially with the implications which all of this has for continuing education administrators. And I throw these out to you as a series of challenges because you are the people in the best position to cope with them and to provide the much needed leadership in the entire area of continuing or further education.

Your leadership must:

1. Provide more effective research approaches to an analysis of community needs.

2. Provide more effective long-range planning of programs to avoid "shot gun" approaches to continuing education.

3. Guide governments and institutions to provide more funds for continuing education programs.

4. Coordinate continuing education programs in such a manner that unnecessary duplication and unhealthy competition will be avoided.

5. Provide increased creativity in conceiving and implementing community service programs.

6. Ensure that better use is made of existing facilities before additional facilities are requested.

Without this new leadership continuing education will continue to be conducted in a haphazard fashion and the challenges will remain unmet.

Conclusion

In conclusion let me simply reiterate two of the concepts which have been developed in this paper. First, I believe that you as continuing educators have a formidable task in assisting society to cope with the drastic changes that have occurred in the past three decades; and to assist individuals in overcoming the future shock of the changes that will be brought about by the scientific and technological achievements predicted for the next three decades. Second, I believe that continuing education will in the very near future be asked to fill the credibility gap left vacant by the formal educational institutions in the last few decades.

Ladies and gentlemen, these enormous challenges are yours --- the ball is now in your court.